STAR TREK™
ADVENTURES

CALL BACK YESTERDAY

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CHAPTER
01.00

CALL BACK YESTERDAY

BY CHRISTOPHER L. BENNETT

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CHAPTER 01.10

CALL BACK YESTERDAY

SYNOPSIS

The crew is drawn to the abandoned planet Zeta Gruis VII by a distress signal and beams down to search the ruins of an alien city. Soon, the crew members begin to catch glimpses of people and things from their past. In time, they may begin to realize they're hallucinating, but the delusions grow worse, causing the team members to lose track of each other.

The hallucinations force the crew members to relive key events from their past, giving the Players an opportunity to roleplay the crucial Career Events established in Step Six of Lifepath creation. This could be a good opportunity to develop an unexplored part of a character's backstory, help a character Challenge a Value, or advance a connection or relationship between Player Characters.

Meanwhile, a cloaked Romulan ship jams the ship's comms and transporters, harassing them from a distance so they can't help the away team. If any Players remain on the ship, they will be involved in defending against the hostile vessel or in searching for a countermeasure to the jamming.

Once the crew on the planet has overcome the hallucinations, they will be confronted by a Romulan Tal Shiar team, who have used a contraband Ferengi thought maker (from *The Next Generation*: "The Battle") to create the hallucinations. The team was lured here using the false distress signal so that the thought maker could be used to probe the Starfleet team's minds and study their weaknesses.

The thought maker normally operates at short range, but the Romulans are experimenting with amplifying its effects. The first experiment failed and allowed the crew to break free, but the Tal Shiar major orders his chief scientist to correct the problem and try again. The scientist warns that this could cause the device to backfire. The device disorients the Romulans and allows the team to fight free. The device overloads and traps the scientist and major in their own memories. If the crew defeats the device and frees the Romulans, the grateful scientist will reveal the source of the contraband thought makers, so the Players can prevent the devices from causing more harm.

DIRECTIVES

In addition to the Prime Directive, the Directives for this mission are:

- Identify distress call source and provide any needed assistance
- Remain alert for potential Romulan activity

The Gamemaster begins this mission with 2 points of Threat for each Player Character in the group.

ADAPTING THIS MISSION TO OTHER ERAS

This scenario presumes a setting in TNG's second season, when the Romulans have only recently re-emerged onto the galactic scene and are seeking intelligence on how the Federation has changed. It could be adapted to take place later in the *Next Generation* era by giving the Romulans some other motivation. Shortly before "The Mind's Eye" it serves as a forerunner to the Romulans' brainwashing plans. The brainwasher from that episode, Taibak, could be used in place of Major Konreth or as his assistant. Set early in the Dominion War, the Romulans could be seeking insight into the crew's encounters with the Dominion.

Adapting the story for an earlier era would be trickier, since the Ferengi would not have been directly contacted by the Federation yet. In this case, the story could be resolved without learning the origin of the thought maker; it would simply be an alien artifact of unknown provenance. The same general setup of the Romulans seeking intelligence about Starfleet could be used in the Original Series era or even the *Enterprise* era, although in the latter case, the Players would have to be prevented from seeing the faces of their captors. Alternatively, the Suliban Cabal is using a thought maker provided by their far-future sponsor.

CHAPTER 01.20

CALL BACK YESTERDAY

ACT 1: RUINS OF THE PAST

SCENE 1: SEARCHING THE RUINS

An away team beams down to the ruins of the city from which the distress signal appeared to emanate. Sensors detected ambiguous life signs from somewhere in the area, but interference (apparently due to the star's Class I radiation hazard) is making it difficult to narrow them down, and the distress signal is no longer being emitted. The planet's atmosphere shields the surface from the star's radiation, so a ground search of the ruined city is the only option.

Zeta Gruis VII was once Class M, but the swelling of its star into a red giant (type K1 III) has turned it into a Class H, arid and hot; the temperature is hazardous during the day, but the team arrives at night, so the heat should be tolerable until the sun rises in about four hours. The gravity is 118% of Earth's, which has helped to slow the planet's atmosphere loss as the star has warmed, but the high gravity, heat, and moderately thin air will cause the away team to grow fatigued more rapidly than normal (though this would have less effect on Vulcans or other species acclimated to such conditions). If there is a medical officer on the away team, they may wish to administer tri-ox compound to the team members.

The Gamemaster may describe the city to the Players thusly:

The ruined city is over two thousand years old and in an advanced state of decay. If not for the durability of the orange-brown, stonelike composite material from which most of the structures are built, the entire city would have crumbled to dust centuries ago. None of the buildings are intact; many are nothing more than piles of rubble, though there are numerous surviving walls and corners standing to a height between one and four stories. From the amount of debris, these buildings must once have been dozens of stories high. Some buildings have metal frameworks that have nearly rusted away. Others have little remaining but broken panes of glass littering the ground. Many of the streets are blocked by piles of rubble, and the ground is covered in fine grains of ground glass and composite.

As for the city's former inhabitants, there is no sign. When the away team investigates the buildings, they will find that whatever artifacts and furnishings were inside must have been taken away when the inhabitants abandoned the planet, or else were worn away by the elements long ago, being made of less durable materials than the buildings themselves. There are broken ceramic pieces here and there, some in recognizable shapes such as bowls and cups, others suggesting the casings of unknown devices, with openings where knobs or display screens might have been. But the away team finds no images of the natives, nor any kind of writing.

Gamemasters should feel free to give the city a more alien layout than the usual right-angle grid of human cities. Perhaps the city blocks could be triangular or hexagonal, or the city could be laid out in concentric rings with radial avenues connecting them, or perhaps it's a city that grew organically and haphazardly without any orderly structure at all.

The crumbling, unstable ruins create a hazard, for they may collapse if disturbed. The away team will have to proceed carefully through the ruins. However, the time limit before

CAPTAIN'S LOG

STARDATE 42802.3

We have diverted to the Zeta Gruis system in response to a distress call from its seventh planet. Previous surveys have shown the planet to be uninhabited, abandoned by its native civilization as its star swelled into a red giant. The distress call appears to come from a city in the southern polar regions, still cool enough to be habitable. We may be about to encounter the last remaining natives – or just some interstellar scavengers or archaeologists.

The distress call gives no specifics about the nature of the threat. However, Zeta Gruis is not far from the Romulan Neutral Zone, and it has been less than a year since the Romulans emerged from isolation and adopted a newly aggressive stance. They have not yet ventured this far into Federation space, but we're keeping our guard up anyway.

daylight should encourage the team to split up to cover more ground as they attempt to track down the life readings. Even on the ground, the biosigns are vague and hard to localize, due to the refractory compounds in the dense building composite. (Known sensor-blocking materials established in *Star Trek* include kelbonite, fistrium, and thalium.)

The team members should experience a sense of unease, which they attribute to the darkness and stifling heat, the planet's gravity, the crumbling ruins and difficult footing, and the eerie wind and occasional startling noises which are probably the ruins settling but possibly something more.

GRUIAN NAKED MOLE RATITE [MINOR NPC]

TRAITS: Gruian Naked Mole Ratite

ATTRIBUTES

CONTROL	11	FITNESS	11	PRESENCE	07
DARING	09	INSIGHT	06	REASON	04

DISCIPLINES

COMMAND	01	SECURITY	01	SCIENCE	00
CONN	00	ENGINEERING	00	MEDICINE	00

STRESS: 12 **RESISTANCE:** 0

ATTACKS:

- Claws (Melee, 4 Knockdown, Size 1H)
- Beak (Melee, 3 Vicious 1, Size 1H, Debilitating)

SPECIAL RULES:

- **BURROW** – So long as not engaged in melee, a Mole Ratite can burrow underground over the course of its turn. This can be used to strike from hiding, giving the Ratite the first Turn in a combat encounter.

Naked Mole Ratites are one of the main surviving predator species in the southern polar region of Zeta Gruis VII. They are flightless, featherless avians approximately 1.8 meters in height with carnivorous beaks and heavy claws which they use to dig pits and tunnels in the ground, both for shelter from daytime temperatures and as an ambush tactic in hunting prey. An only moderately social species, they tend to be solitary hunters and can compete for food and territory, but are capable of banding together when faced with a serious threat. While not sapient, they are relatively intelligent animals with a limited capacity for strategy and planning, but they are slow to adapt to unfamiliar situations and likely to retreat if they feel threatened.

ENCOUNTER: RATITE ATTACK

One or more groups of team members should now have to fend off the indigenous wildlife: large, flightless avians resembling cassowaries or emus, but with no feathers and heavy claws in place of wings. They often use their claws to dig shallow pits and lie in wait under a thin layer of sand and dirt to ambush passing prey. The only name that fits them is Naked Mole Ratites. The stony rubble of the city gives them additional cover and interferes with tricorder readings.

The Mole Ratite attacks should have a Difficulty of only 1 or 2, depending on the number of attackers and whether the Players are taken by surprise. The Mole Ratites are unused to anything like a phaser, and stunning one or two in an attacking group should frighten off the rest. These encounters are just enough to heighten the team's alertness and anxiety.

SCENE 2: HALLUCINATIONS

Now, the team members should begin to come under the hallucinatory influence of the Romulans' thought maker. A thought maker can either exert a direct effect at short range or be used as a remote controller for a second thought maker in another location. In this case, the Romulans are using one thought maker in their base to control another one buried somewhere in the ruins, its location shielded from tricorders by the stony composite. The devices normally operate at short range, but the device in the ruins has been modified to extend the range and power of its psionic field. The false distress signal and life readings are being emitted from the area where the thought maker is buried, so the team is lured into range of its effects. Once they come within about a kilometer of the device, the team should begin experiencing random visual and auditory hallucinations, growing stronger the closer they get and the longer they spend under the influence of the psionic field. Of course, only the Gamemaster should know about the device and its placement.

To start with, the hallucinations should be minor – glimpses of things that seem familiar, bursts of remembered sounds like the voices we hear when half-asleep. The Player Characters probably suspect their minds are playing tricks on them, that they're just glimpsing Mole Ratites or hearing their distant calls, or that they're growing fatigued from the high gravity and thin air.

But soon the characters will start to become sure they're seeing humanoid figures, possibly the people they're searching for, and will be drawn to investigate. The Gamemaster should maneuver the team members apart from one another, spreading them further out into the ruins. (It's possible that there are Romulans watching the team from hiding, making noises to lure the team members farther apart

or knocking down buildings to create obstacles between them, but the Players should not become aware of their presence yet.) The sensations should grow increasingly vivid and intense, and it should not yet be clear to the Players that their Characters are hallucinating. If they can be convinced that some important or impossible figure from their past is actually present, it gives them more incentive to give chase and be separated from their fellows. Failing that, the hallucinations should eventually grow intense enough that they drown out each character's awareness of their true surroundings and they lose track of one another. The Players might be encouraged to suspect they've somehow actually travelled back in time and are reliving their past experiences, but they should be guided to play the scene as if they are forgetting all about Zeta Gruis VII and their present-day situation and are compelled to relive the events as though they were real. Ideally, the entire team should be split up by the end of this scene.

SCENE 3: IDENTIFYING THE INTERFERENCE

Back on the ship in orbit, the interference becomes severe enough that the ship loses all contact with the away team and it is no longer possible to beam them back up. But astrometric sensors show that the red giant's activity has not increased. It should now be evident that there is an artificial source for the jamming. The Task to identify the source may draw on **Insight** or **Reason** + **Security** or **Science**, with a Difficulty of 3. Success will lead to the conclusion that there's a cloaked ship somewhere in orbit, preventing the Starfleet vessel from contacting its team. The ship and crew have been lured into a trap, most likely by the Romulans. But why?

Gamemaster Note: For a small gaming group, this and the subsequent shipboard scenes can be omitted or presumed to take place "offscreen."

CREATING THE MEMORIES

The Gamemaster should draw the Player Characters' hallucinations from the crucial Career Events established in Step Six of Lifepath creation. If the established Career Events are not suitable, or if the characters were Created in Play, the Gamemaster and Player may use Step Six by itself to devise new Career Events as needed. The Gamemaster may wish to find some pretense for doing this in an earlier game session, so as not to tip the players off about the events of this scenario. Alternatively, the Gamemaster may choose to re-enact a moment from an earlier campaign that was pivotal or especially dramatic for that character, or one that was not resolved satisfactorily, allowing the Player another chance to achieve a Milestone in coping with the challenge. This option presupposes that the gaming group has had several prior adventures in the same time frame, so it might be more viable if the scenario is adjusted for another era, as discussed in "Other Eras of Play" on page 2. The latter two options could also be used to create memories/hallucinations for any Non-Player Characters on the away team.

For variety's sake, a mix of past events should be drawn on for the hallucinations. Some Player Characters should be forced to relive traumatic experiences or confront old enemies, but others could be tempted by the lure of reliving a joyful time or being reunited with a lost loved one. Ideally, the Gamemaster should choose whatever events are likely to resonate best with each Player Character's personality and story arc and maximize the opportunity for character development Milestones and roleplaying.

In "The Battle," Picard's hallucination was portrayed as a robotic re-enactment of a single memory in a repeating cycle, but that could have been the specific effect DaiMon Bok wished it to have on Picard, rather than the device's exclusive mode of operation. It will give the Players more latitude for role-playing if they are able to change the memories or have new conversations with the figures from their past. Presumably the Gamemaster would play the hallucinated figures as NPCs, but if the hallucination is of a character that has been played by one of the other Players, then that Player could portray the hallucination as a Supporting Character. This could be a way that Players uninvolved in the away team could participate in the planet-based scenes.

CHAPTER 01.30

CALL BACK YESTERDAY

ACT 2: THE MEMORY TRAP

SCENE 1: TRAPPED IN MEMORY

On the planet, each Player Character and NPC should now be fully in the throes of their own hallucination, reliving some key event from their past. It would probably be best to break the first part of this scene down into several sub-scenes, one for each Player Character in turn as they deal with their own hallucinated memories. (NPCs would not require their own scenes.) It might be useful to structure this similarly to an Encounter, letting the Players take turns working through their respective experiences in stages, since their characters are all going through this at the same time. While this phase should be allowed to play out long enough to give all the Players adequate opportunity for roleplay, they should also be given the chance to recognize the hallucinations for what they are and eventually overcome their effect. This could be achieved by drawing on **Control, Insight**, or **Reason**, by applying an appropriate Value, or by particularly effective roleplay; e.g. working through their characters' past traumas in a way that would give them new clarity.

The Naked Mole Ratites should be kept in mind as a continuing presence. They are also agitated by the hallucinogenic field, and while some have fled to safety, a few have been driven into a more aggressive state. This could present an additional hazard to any Player Character or NPC who has not yet shaken off their hallucination, since the character's obliviousness would mean that the Ratite would get the first Turn in their combat. If the character is reliving a combat experience, they may mistake a Ratite for their imaginary foe and fight it off; but a different character might be taken entirely unaware. (It might be best to save that for NPCs, one of whom might be killed to highlight the danger of the situation.) On the other hand, the Ratite's own hallucinations could impair its abilities sufficiently to save the character's life.

Players who have succeeded in the Task to overcome their own hallucinations will remember where they are and be able to search for other team members. Their hallucinations will not stop, but they will be able to push through them with a continuing effort of will, which will place them under cumulative strain and fatigue. Perhaps the people they hallucinate will seem to follow them and speak to them, distracting them from their search efforts. But keep in mind that each Player's hallucinations cannot be seen or heard by the other Players, so this could be tricky to roleplay in scenes where two or more characters are together.

Each Player's recovery will add 1 Momentum to the pool. Thus, upon finding another Player Character still experiencing hallucinations, the recovered Player or Players will be able to help talk them out of their hallucinations, reducing the Difficulty of the other's recovery Task by 1 for each recovered Player present. They will also be able to defend any unrecovered Player from Mole Ratite attacks. (NPCs are dependent on Player Characters to help them recover; this is treated as an Assist Task for the Player Character.) The challenge is for all the team members to reunite and recover, individually or with the others' help, before the sun rises and the temperature climbs to a hazardous level.

ENCOUNTER: ROMULANS

Once most or all of the team members have recovered and reunited, however, the true enemy will emerge: a squad of a dozen or more Romulan soldiers. At this point, the team is still exerting mental effort to resist the hallucinations and should be too fatigued (i.e., lost too many points of Stress) to put up much of a fight, particularly against superior numbers. Also, the imminent sunrise makes it advisable not to stay out in the open. Thus, the team's best option is to allow themselves to be taken into custody by the Romulans. If the Players decide to fight back anyway, they will most likely be stunned and taken captive. If one or more Players manage to escape in the battle, they will have to contend with the hazardous temperatures once sunrise comes. However, it might be preferable to let at least one NPC get away, since they could come in handy in Act Three.

SCENE 2: THE THOUGHT MAKER

Once the away team is taken to (or revives in) the Romulans' base, read:

You find yourself in a large, windowless chamber whose walls are made of the same composite as the buildings above. It appears to be an underground section within the city, sheltered sufficiently from the elements to remain

mostly intact. The walls and ceiling show some deterioration, but they have been braced with modern materials of what appears to be Romulan design.

Your team is confined within a makeshift force field enclosure on one end of the chamber, about four meters by two meters. The fields surround you on all four sides, and are generated by emitter pillars that extend from floor to ceiling, one at each corner and one in the center of each longer side. On the wall just beyond the rear of the enclosure, a faded, chipped mural offers a tantalizing glimpse of what may be the former inhabitants of this world, but it is difficult to make out the details. The presence of several armed Romulan guards around the enclosure draws your attention more urgently.

On the other side of the chamber is a collection of Romulan equipment and furnishings, appearing to be a bare-bones laboratory. At the heart of the lab's main workstation is a spherical silver device whose lower half is marked with rectilinear circuitry patterns in white light, and whose upper half pulses with red light from within. Around its equator are four rows of slider controls. The instrument is hooked up by an assortment of probes and cables to Romulan-made monitors and other devices. One monitor shows a status readout in branched alien script, with translations superimposed in Romulan text.

(The alien script is Ferengi, though the characters may not be aware of that, since the first direct contact with the Ferengi was less than two years before.)

Since the force field enclosure is makeshift, a character with appropriate training should recognize that it has some design flaws that can be overcome by an **Insight + Security** or **Engineering** Task with a Difficulty of 2. But any such attempt now would be noticed by the guards. It's something to keep in mind for later, if an opportunity arises.

Working in the lab is a female Romulan scientist whose name will be established as Doctor Varalek. On noticing the captured team's arrival or awakening, she opens a comm channel to inform Major Konreth of same. If the team members question her, she grows tense and tries to avoid their gaze, telling them curtly to wait for the major. Implicitly, she's trying to avoid identifying with the prisoners as people, preferring to think of them purely as research subjects. She's not as hardened as the soldiers or Tal Shiar agents around her, and is trying to avoid having thoughts or interactions that might make her feel empathy or guilt toward the captives.

Konreth arrives, a haughty, relatively young Romulan male in a Tal Shiar uniform. Two more guards are with him. He's just come from speaking to the commanding officer of the cloaked ship in orbit, and is concerned about the risk of more Starfleet personnel being sent down. He speaks angrily to Varalek, who replies with cowed patience. Their dialogue is as follows:

Konreth: *"Doctor Varalek, you gave me your assurance that you had amplified the thought maker's effects sufficiently to make resistance impossible! Tell me, scientist, is this device just another Ferengi fraud, or do I need to have you executed for incompetence?"*

Varalek: *"These devices are not designed to operate at long range, Major, and spreading their effect across multiple subjects diminishes their intensity. The very reason we need these tests is so that we may learn how to calibrate the thought makers to produce the optimal effect without overloading their psionic circuits. Now that we have the test subjects in a more controlled environment, we can continue the experiment. Besides – our goal was to assess the abilities and weaknesses of the Federation's races. The fact that they were able to resist the effect is valuable information which we can take into account in future attempts."*

Konreth: *"Only if you can overcome that resistance. Otherwise this bauble will be useless as a weapon!"*

ROMULAN UHLAN [MINOR NPC]

TRAITS: Romulan

ATTRIBUTES

CONTROL	12	FITNESS	08	PRESENCE	08
DARING	09	INSIGHT	10	REASON	12

DISCIPLINES

COMMAND	02	SECURITY	02	SCIENCE	05
CONN	01	ENGINEERING	04	MEDICINE	02

STRESS: 10 **RESISTANCE:** 0

ATTACKS:

- Unarmed Strike (Melee, 3▲ Knockdown, Size 1H, Non-lethal)
- Dagger (Melee, 3▲ Vicious 1, Size 1H, Deadly, Hidden 1)
- Disruptor Pistol (Ranged, 5▲ Vicious 1, Size 1H)
- **Escalation** Disruptor Rifle (Ranged, 6▲ Vicious 1, Size 2H, Accurate)

SPECIAL RULES:

- **GUILE AND CUNNING** — When attempting to remain hidden or unnoticed, a Romulan may spend one Threat to increase the Difficulty of enemy Tasks to detect them by one.
- **WARY** — Whenever a Romulan attempts a Task to notice or detect an enemy or hazard, they may re-roll one d20.

Now the team members recognize what is at stake. If they attempt to speak to Konreth, whether to protest their treatment, appeal to him to see reason, or threaten him with retaliation from their ship, he will respond dismissively and contemptuously, assuring them that they will be merely the first to fall before the brilliance of the Romulan Star Empire. If someone points out the incongruity that he's using a Ferengi device, he will show unease and irritation, but will not dignify them with a reply.

Once Konreth has sufficiently asserted dominance over his captives, he threatens Varalek with the consequences of failure once more before striding out of the lab, followed by his two personal guards. Varalek turns back to her work, determinedly ignoring the captives' attempts to address her.

DOCTOR VARALEK [MAJOR NPC]

TRAITS: Romulan

VALUES:
- I Must Be Loyal For My Family's Sake
- The Federation Is a Threat; My Leaders Tell Me So

ATTRIBUTES

CONTROL	12	FITNESS	08	PRESENCE	08
DARING	09	INSIGHT	10	REASON	12

DISCIPLINES

COMMAND	02	SECURITY	02	SCIENCE	05
CONN	01	ENGINEERING	04	MEDICINE	02

FOCUSES: Xenopsychology, Neurology, Electronics, Psychological Warfare

STRESS: 10 **RESISTANCE:** 0

ATTACKS:
- Disruptor Pistol (Ranged, 6 Vicious 1, Size 1H)

SPECIAL RULES:
- **GUILE AND CUNNING** — When attempting to remain hidden or unnoticed, a Romulan may spend one Threat to increase the Difficulty of enemy Tasks to detect them by one.
- **WARY** — Whenever a Romulan attempts a Task to notice or detect an enemy or hazard, they may re-roll one d20.

MAJOR KONRETH [MAJOR NPC]

TRAITS: Romulan

VALUES:
- Prove My Worth to the Empire
- Everyone But Me is Expendable

ATTRIBUTES

CONTROL	12	FITNESS	10	PRESENCE	11
DARING	08	INSIGHT	09	REASON	09

DISCIPLINES

COMMAND	04	SECURITY	03	SCIENCE	03
CONN	01	ENGINEERING	02	MEDICINE	02

FOCUSES: Deception, Infiltration, Interrogation, Paranoid

STRESS: 12 **RESISTANCE:** 0

ATTACKS:
- Unarmed Strike (Melee, 4 Knockdown, Size 1H, Nonlethal)
- Dagger (Melee, 4 Vicious 1, Size 1H, Deadly, Hidden 1)
- Disruptor Pistol (Ranged, 6 Vicious 1, Size 1H)

SPECIAL RULES:
- **GUILE AND CUNNING** — When attempting to remain hidden or unnoticed, a Romulan may spend one Threat to increase the Difficulty of enemy Tasks to detect them by one.
- **RUTHLESS AND DETERMINED** — Major Konreth may spend 2 Threat to gain the effects of a point of Determination, rather than the normal 3.
- **SUPREME AUTHORITY** —Whenever a Romulan currently under Konreth's command attempts a Task to resist persuasion or intimidation, Konreth may spend 1 Threat to allow that Romulan to re-roll, even if Konreth is not present in that scene herself.
- **WARY** — Whenever a Romulan attempts a Task to notice or detect an enemy or hazard, they may re-roll one d20.

ROMULAN SCIENCE VESSEL

A modified Romulan scout ship of a type active in the mid-24th century, specialized for experimental research but more than adequately equipped for combat and espionage. Comparable in size and capabilities to the Bird-of-Prey of a century earlier, though more advanced.

TRAITS: Romulan science vessel

SYSTEMS

COMMS	06	ENGINES	07	STRUCTURE	07
COMPUTERS	09	SENSORS	09	WEAPONS	08

DEPARTMENTS

COMMAND	01	SECURITY	02	SCIENCE	03
CONN	02	ENGINEERING	02	MEDICINE	02

POWER: ?

SCALE: 4

SHIELDS: 9

RESISTANCE: 4

CREW: Talented (Attribute 10, Discipline 3)

ATTACKS:

- Disruptor Banks (Energy, Range Medium, 8 Vicious 1)
- Plasma Torpedoes (Torpedo, Range Long, 6 Persistent 8, Calibration)

SPECIAL RULES:

- **CLOAKING DEVICE** — The vessel has a device that allows it to vanish from view. Operating the device requires a **Control + Engineering Task** with a Difficulty of 2, assisted by the ship's **Engines + Security** (this is a Task from the tactical position). This Task has a Power requirement of 3. If successful, the vessel gains the Cloaked Trait. While cloaked, the vessel cannot attempt any attacks, nor can it be the target of an attack unless the attacker has found some way of detecting the cloaked ship. While cloaked, a vessel's shields are down. It requires a Minor Action to decloak.

008	RELAPSE PROTOCOL
AEG	CURRENT TIMESTAMP
JP1	INTERIOR PORT PLATE RESET
702	ANTIMATTER MULTIPOD EJECTION

SCENE 3: THE ROMULAN SHIP

On the ship, the bridge crew continues to analyze the interference, a similar Task to the one in the previous act, but with a Difficulty of 2 since they are building on their previous success. Success in the Task will reveal that the interference field is emanating from several cloaked loci, most of which are in regularly spaced orbits and are probably satellites, but one of which is more mobile and is probably a midsized Romulan ship, a scout or science vessel. If the Starfleet ship draws within Medium range (i.e., the adjacent Zone) of the cloaked Romulan vessel, the vessel will fire on the ship and retreat to a more distant Zone. If the Players' starship is large enough, add a second science vessel as needed to balance it.

If the crew attempts to defeat the interference field by locating and attacking the cloaked satellites, the science vessel(s) will harry them, firing on them to keep them from bringing down the satellites, but otherwise retreating out of range. The conflict should be inconclusive, the ship serving mainly as a Complication to interfere with any attempt to destroy the satellites. This interference should encourage the shipboard Players to consider alternative means of overcoming the jamming or penetrating the ship's cloak, perhaps by modifying their own ship's sensors, transporters, or other systems. Whatever plan they devise should be an Extended Task that continues into the next scene (Work 10, Magnitude 2, Resistance 1, base Difficulty 2), though this could be modified as appropriate depending on the specific strategy.

925	EXTERIOR PRESSURE READING
65A2	INTERIOR PORT ARRAY
AUG	INTERIOR STARBOARD ARRAY
13	BINARY FILE COMPILER
002	EJECTION COIL DAMPENER
MADX	SUBSPACE TRANSLATOR

REPEAT

CHAPTER 01.40

CALL BACK YESTERDAY

ACT 3: THE FINAL TRIAL

SCENE 1: CALM BEFORE THE STORM

Back in the lab, as Varalek continues her efforts to amplify the thought maker's power, the captured Player Characters have time to absorb the fact that they will soon be subjected to another attack like the previous one. This gives them time to discuss and reflect on their relived memories, to help each other deal with any personal conflicts or traumas those memories have awakened, to gird themselves and each other for the renewed trauma to come, and otherwise to engage in roleplay and character development.

The Players may also attempt to use Social Conflict to appeal to Varalek. An appeal based on **Science** + **Reason** or **Presence** is most likely to engage with her and make her willing to talk. If this succeeds, then Varalek, in an effort to maintain detachment, will try to interrogate the captives on the events of their hallucinations and the feelings they invoked. Alternatively, if the Players do not attempt to engage with Varalek, she may become interested in their conversations about their relived memories and initiate the interrogation herself.

The captives can attempt to use this to make an emotional connection with Varalek and win her sympathy. This is most likely to succeed if the conversation touches on family relationships, particularly bereavements. With deft questioning, the players may be able to get Varalek to reveal the following:

- Varalek is a widow and mother of two, having lost her spouse the year before in an unexplained attack that destroyed several Romulan and Federation border outposts.
- The outposts were completely eradicated, with nothing but craters left where they stood, so there was never a body for her family to bury.
- The identity of the attackers is still a mystery to the Romulans, so Varalek doesn't even know what enemy to hate – nor can she promise her children that the enemy will not return.

Since these events take place shortly after the *Enterprise* first encountered the Borg and identified them as the ones apparently responsible for the destruction of those outposts, the Romulans are not yet aware of the identity of the destroyers – or at least, if the Romulan government and Tal Shiar know, they have not yet made it public. If the Players succeed in getting Varalek to open up about her tragedy, they may be able to use Starfleet's newfound knowledge of the Borg to offer her some closure, and possibly win her trust through their willingness to share this information.

However, Varalek's family ties may also work against the Players. For one thing, the death of her spouse makes her receptive to the Romulan government's propaganda about the need to be strong and well-armed against outside threats, and to be free to expand the Empire's borders to acquire new territory and resources. For another thing, even if the Players do manage to make some connection with Varalek, she fears what the Tal Shiar will do to her children if she should be disloyal. She believes her government is in the right and is justified in punishing traitors, but that does not lessen her fear of the consequences if she should be declared a traitor.

Eventually, Varalek will grow uncomfortable with where the discussion is heading and will order the captives to be silent, lest she have the guards stun them. Whether or not the attempt to reach her succeeds will not become evident until later.

SCENE 2: SHIP ENCOUNTER

By now, the shipboard Players should have had enough time to complete the Extended Task of devising countermeasures for the Romulan cloaks or jamming field. Once the countermeasures are complete and put into use, the attempt should provoke the Romulan science vessel (or vessels) into making a more sustained attack upon the ship.

While the ship must defend itself, the Players should keep in mind that their priority is to defeat the jamming and rescue their team, not to destroy the Romulans. Though the newly

re-emerged Romulans are clearly unfriendly toward the Federation, they have yet to attempt any overt aggression, and Starfleet Command still hopes to ease tensions rather than escalating them. Destroying the attacking ship would only heighten Romulan aggression in the future, so the crew should do their best to evade or disable the ship without doing too much damage. But the Romulans are operating under no such restraints. If the Starfleet ship is badly enough damaged, it may be forced to retreat.

If the shipboard crew succeeds in neutralizing the science vessel and the jamming field, they will be unable to lock onto the away team, who are underground and shielded from sensors. However, if any Player or NPC managed to escape capture by the Romulans earlier, they could now be beamed up, whereupon they could report on what they know of the events on the planet. Depending on how much time the survivor spent in the hazardous daytime heat before being rescued, they might need medical treatment before being able to report. They would not know specifically about the thought maker, but a search of computer records could turn up the relevant information about Captain Picard's encounter with DaiMon Bok.

OPTIONAL SCENE: RESCUE TEAM

In the event that the ship succeeds in defeating the Romulan jamming, a rescue party may be sent to the surface to locate and extract the first away team, in environmental gear to cope with the hazardous temperatures. The Naked Mole Ratites should have retreated into burrows for protection from the sun, but if the rescue team stumbles across a burrow, it could provoke the Ratite inside to attack.

A more pressing concern is the risk of the thought maker field being reactivated. If there was no rescued crew member from the original party, the rescue team would have no foreknowledge of this threat, but they would be actively searching for dangers, giving them a slim chance of detecting the thought maker hidden in the ruins (say, with a Difficulty of 4). If a rescued crew member did warn them about the mental attacks, they will have a better idea of what to look for and have an improved chance (Difficulty of 2) of finding and disabling the device.

This scene should be presumed to unfold concurrently with the following scene. However, if the rescue team is very lucky, they may locate the Romulan base in time to assist the captives at the climax of the following scene. If the captives are unlucky in freeing themselves, the rescue party may be necessary as an ace in the hole.

SCENE 3: THE STORM

Back in the Romulan lab, Major Konreth arrives and demands that Varalek proceed with testing her modifications to the thought maker. The battle in orbit has made him concerned that the Starfleet ship may send down a rescue party (or already has, depending on the previous scene's outcome), so he urges the doctor to proceed. Varalek protests that she's not comfortable with testing in these conditions. Before, the thought maker here in the lab was operating in remote mode – serving only as a controller for the duplicate unit in the ruins. To test it in close-range conditions requires using the lab unit as a transmitter, and though she has calibrated the device to protect Romulan minds from its effects, she can't be certain how the modifications might affect those calibrations. (If there are any Vulcan members of the away team, she will point out that giving Romulans immunity would also render Vulcans immune.) Varalek objects to conducting her experiment in haste, under less than ideal conditions.

If the Players have managed to win any amount of sympathy from her, Varalek's objections will be more intense, and she may bring up the subject of Starfleet's intelligence concerning the Borg if it came up in earlier conversation. She may point out that if the Federation knew the identity of the attackers, then the Tal Shiar must have known soon thereafter. If she suspects that Konreth knew the identity of her spouse's killers but did not tell her, this would do much to weaken her loyalty to him.

If the Players failed to reason with her or did not make the attempt, Varalek will object only on scientific grounds and be easier for Konreth to convince.

Either way, Konreth is determined to score a victory and is deaf to any objections. He tells Varalek that if she cannot guarantee the effectiveness of her calibrations, he will have her imprisoned for incompetence and order her subordinate to carry out the experiment. Concerned for her family, Varalek will submit and grudgingly proceed with the test.

Once more, the Player Characters will be subjected to their respective hallucinations and must attempt to fight them off. Despite being together as a group, the Difficulty of the Task is increased due to the proximity and intensity of the thought maker. If they did not win any of Varalek's sympathy, the Difficulty will be 5; if they did succeed, it will be 4, since she's torn between her duty to state and family and her empathy for the captives, and thus would be doing less than her best to make the device effective.

Any Players who manage to resist the hallucinations and recognize what's happening around them will see that the Romulans are also caught in the thought maker's effect, reliving their own memories. As Varalek warned, the thought maker's calibrations didn't hold and the Romulans are

being hit as hard as the Starfleet crew. But it's harder for the Romulans to break free, because they don't have the prior experience or the mutual camaraderie that the Starfleet crew has. The one most capable of resisting the effect is Varalek, because of her high **Control** and **Reason** and her intimate understanding of what's happening to her. But she's hallucinating the day she got word of her spouse's death and had to tell her children. It's a struggle for her to overcome those devastating memories.

What happens next depends on whether the Players managed to win Varalek's sympathy in the earlier scene:

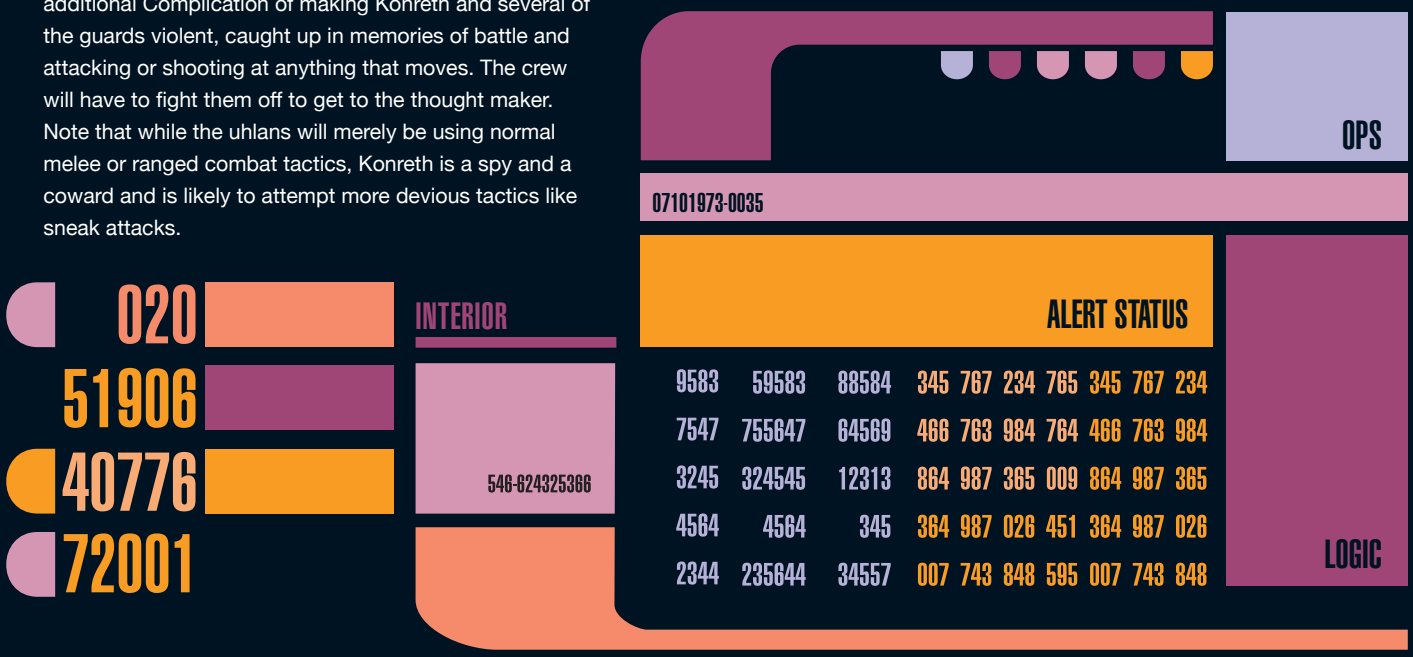
- If the captives have Varalek's sympathy, she will recognize their greater ability to resist the thought maker. Although she's too overcome to perform the complex task of shutting down the device, she can muster enough will to deactivate the force field, allowing the crew to get free and attempt to shut down the device themselves. This is a Task requiring **Control** or **Reason** + **Science** or **Engineering**. Failing that, they could use **Daring** + **Security** and simply take one of the Romulans' disruptor pistols and destroy the device. Either way, Major Konreth will retain enough **Control + Command** to recognize the threat and attempt to stop the crew by force, requiring them to face him in Combat. However, both sides will be impaired by the Complication of the active thought maker, and the crew will have the advantage due to their experience resisting it.

- If the captives only partially won Varalek's sympathy, they must use a Persuasion Task with a Difficulty of 2 to talk her into letting them help now. If they succeed, she releases the force field and the scene plays out as before. Yet the delay will have amplified the device's effect on both the captives and the Romulans, creating the additional Complication of making Konreth and several of the guards violent, caught up in memories of battle and attacking or shooting at anything that moves. The crew will have to fight them off to get to the thought maker. Note that while the uhlans will merely be using normal melee or ranged combat tactics, Konreth is a spy and a coward and is likely to attempt more devious tactics like sneak attacks.

- If the Players did not win any sympathy from Varalek, then she will not deactivate the force field and any recovered characters will have to attempt to do it themselves from the inside. As discussed before, this is an Insight + Security or Engineering Task with a Difficulty of 2, but with the Complication of the active thought maker and the need to resist the hallucinations. Even if the Task succeeds, the delay will have provoked the Romulans to violence as before.

In each scenario, there is a chance that Varalek will be mortally wounded in the crossfire, but this chance is higher in the second scenario and highest in the third (since Varalek will be more out of it without a connection to the captives to help her stay focused). In this case, her last words will be a futile plea for someone to take care of her children. If the team saves Varalek, however, she will be grateful, and will be convinced that the experiment is a failure. "I knew it was a bad idea to experiment with technology that even the Ferengi have outlawed," she says. If they already won her sympathy before, she will tell the crew about the Ferengi black-market supplier who has been selling the devices, saying that he poses a threat to both their nations and should be stopped. If they have not previously won her sympathy, they may use a Persuasion Task to convince her to give them that information. It's a small concession, but enough to create some hope that the conflicts of the past need not be repeated in the future.

However, the remaining Romulans will recover soon, and the away team must get out while they can. Varalek (if she survives) says she must return to her family, and she's confident she can convince her superiors that this whole experiment was a bad idea. If anyone will pay the price for its failure, it will be Konreth.



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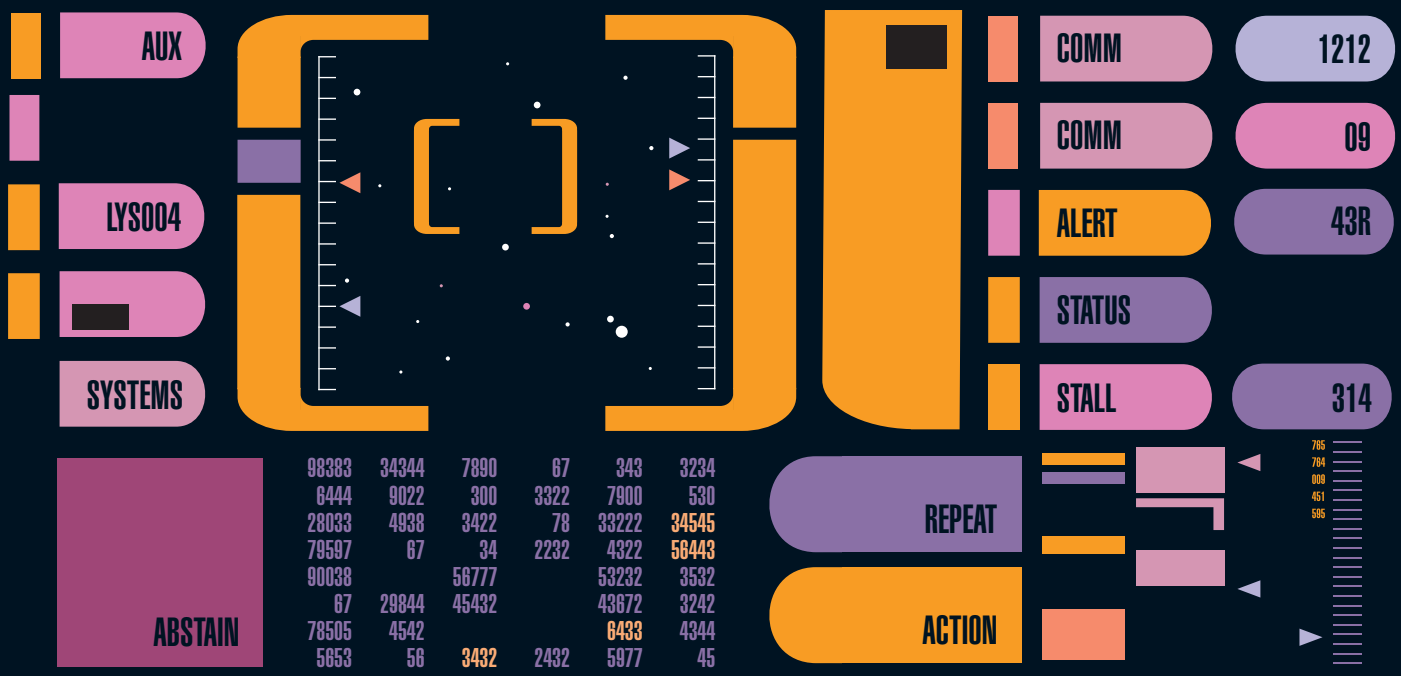
CALL BACK YESTERDAY
CONCLUSION

With the failure of the experiment and the destruction of the thought maker, the Romulans have beaten a hasty retreat, allowing the away team(s) to return to the ship. Once back on board, the away team members will have a chance to reflect on their relived memories or talk about them with shipmates. This is where any character development or Values challenges will be resolved and Milestones achieved.

CONTINUING VOYAGES...

If the away team was successful in learning the source of the thought makers from Varalek, this could be a seed for a follow-up adventure in which the crew hunts down the Ferengi black-market dealer and brings him to justice. Keep in mind that the Ferengi Alliance has outlawed thought makers, so this dealer is a renegade and the crew might be able to gain the Alliance's cooperation in tracking him down – which would be the first time that the Federation and Alliance have worked toward a common goal. Once the crew locates the dealer, perhaps the Players whose characters were not exposed to the thought maker before could go through a similar ordeal themselves when he tries to use it against them. Or perhaps the dealer (and the Gamemaster) could think up some other nasty mental effects that the thought makers could inflict on his enemies.

An alternative follow-up adventure could involve the further exploration of the Zeta Gruian ruins. The underground facility discovered by the Romulans could contain deeper chambers with intact writing or artifacts (whatever the Romulans didn't already plunder or destroy). These could provide insights about the nature of the civilization that lived here. The paradox is that, given the age of the star, it must have already been a red giant when the civilization arose – just moderately cooler than it is now. The seventh planet would not have been habitable while the star was on the main sequence, so it would not have spent enough time as a Class-M planet to have evolved intelligent life naturally. Thus, the Gruians must have been a colony of some other civilization, either settled on Zeta Gruis VII or seeded here millennia in the past. Learning their nature and origins could point the way toward discovering where they went when they abandoned the planet.